

Remarks/Arguments

Claims 1-24 are pending in the application. Claims 1-6, 17, 18, and 22-24 have been elected subject to the restriction requirement, and have been rejected by the Examiner. Claims 7-9, 10-16, and 19-21 are withdrawn from consideration. Reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-6, 17, 18, and 22-24 in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The Rejection Of Claims 1-6, 17, 18, And 22-24 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) :

The Examiner has rejected claim 1-6, 17, 18, and 22-24 as anticipated by Hergott (U.S. Patent No. 6,066,035.

Applicant disagrees with the Examiner's conclusion and traverses the rejection for the following reasons. 102(b) requires that the prior art reference be patented more than one year prior to the date of the application. Here the Hergott reference has an effective § 102(b) date of May 23, 2000. Conversely, while the present application has an official 35 U.S.C. § 371(c) filing date of 26 November 2002, the present application also has an International filing date of 26 January 2000 and a priority date of 05 April 1999. Thus, the present application has an effective filing date of 05 April 1999, which is prior to the effective date of the § 102(b) Hergott reference (May 23, 2000). For example, please see the 20 March 2003 letter from Daniel Stemmer from PCT Legal Affairs listing the priority date of the present application as 05 April 1999. Accordingly, Applicant submits that claims 1-6, 17, 18, and 22-24 are in condition for allowance.

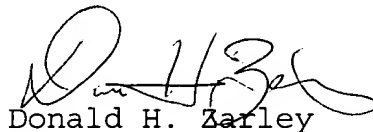
CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant believes claims 1-6, 17, 18, and 22-24 are in condition for allowance, and Applicant respectfully requests allowance of such

claims. If any issues remain that may be expeditiously addressed in a telephone interview, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned at 515/558-0200.

Any fees or extensions of time believed to be due in connection with this amendment are enclosed with this amendment; however, consider this a request for any extension inadvertently omitted, and charge any additional fees to Deposit Account No. 50-2098.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment